

CLASSIC DRIVER

De Widehem Automobiles: Dreaming underground

Lead

Tucked away in an underground garage in the elegant 15th arrondissement of Paris, the young team of De Widehem Automobiles has – since 2003 – established one of the most fascinating showrooms in the French capital...

Legendary classics and modern supercars are hidden behind an utterly inconspicuous backdrop...

...and yet the the cars, ranging from legendary classics to modern supercars and saloons, are hidden behind an utterly inconspicuous backdrop. A mirrored window in a narrow street near the Eiffel Tower, next to a plain garage entrance: no one would guess that here hides one of the most intriguing car collections in France. The understatement is intentional – access to the sacred halls of the underground car park is by appointment only, and the business's Parisian customers appreciate the discretion. Some 10 years ago, Nicholas Mélin turned his passion for automobiles into a career and founded his own car dealership. Today, you can discover all the major European marques in De Widehem Automobiles' stocklist, including Aston Martin, Bentley, Ferrari, Maserati, Lamborghini and Porsche; but any top-class model might find a good home here.

A complete service



Managing Director Nicholas Mélin and his young and friendly team take time for their clients – and this approach pays dividends: anyone who has ever bought from De Widehem is almost certain to return. Some leave their cars parked in the 1,700-square-metre, well-secured garage and get them out only at the weekends for a pleasure-ride. Many of the sports cars and classics that live here are pure summer cars, hence De Widehem uses the winter months to carry out small repairs and maintenance in its 'car hotel'. Together with partner company Red Parts, spare components are rapidly and cost-effectively procured for Italian brands such as Ferrari, Maserati or Lamborghini.

Automotive passion

De Widehem Automobiles will even take on administrative duties for its customers, if requested, so that you can enjoy your Mustang Fastback or McLaren without worrying about such distractions as the insurance. This is a highly popular service, especially when many customers have more than one car. As a result of De Widehem's obvious passion for automobiles, its fame has spread well beyond the 15th arrondissement: Nicholas Mélin was previously seen on French television – in the programme 'Fast Club' he would drive through Paris in a Lamborghini, or report on the news at the Geneva Motor Show.

Spoilt for choice



Customers, meanwhile, are spoiled for choice: will it be the magnificent Aston Martin DB5 or perhaps a rare DB7 Vantage Zagato? Should you invest in the dynamism of a McLaren 12C or the timeless lines of a 996 Porsche 911? On our last visit we opted for a [Ferrari 308 GTB](#) - and kidnapped it for a test-drive along the Seine.

Photos: Jan Baedeker

Gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/cars/de-widehem-automobiles-dreaming-underground>
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